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ABSTRACT

A tentative conceptual framework for understanding the transnational political role of universities is presented. This framework categorizes university participation in a large international political system and an important international knowledge system that is part of the larger and interactive: the institutional, local/national, and international levels. This conceptual framework allows one to examine issues of interdependence and autonomy in a way that illuminates the conflict between these two characteristics. It also suggests the importance of patterns of domination through interdependence in order to understand the dynamics of maintaining institutional autonomy as a political goal. The conceptual framework and concern with interdependence and autonomy led to a research agenda that emphasizes the development of aggregate data and explanations informed by a number of case studies using holistic methods. (Author/SW)

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UNIVERSITIES AS TRANSNATIONAL POLITICAL ACTORS: INTERDEPENDENCE AND AUTONOMY

The purpose of this essay is to begin to frame the questions about the university which will allow us to understand better the position of the university in its international setting. This exercise of question formulation will attempt to draw on the insights of the literatures of higher education(1) and international studies(2) to initiate a dialogue between the two fields. And the manner in which this enquiry will proceed will be informed by a third sector of intellectual discourse -- normative policy analysis. This perspective combines the interest of the multi-discipline of policy studies with the traditional concerns of ethics and political philosophy. In sum, this paper is a prolegomenon to a dialogue among areas of study concerning a serious problem of scholarly and public policy interest—the transnational role of universities.

The essay's agenda will be to consider basic conceptual issues involved in the analysis of the political role of universities in transnational settings

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and then to relate the fundamental questions to policy issues of autonomy and interdependence. Finally, the arguments of the essay will suggest a research agenda for the next decade.

I. THE UNIVERSITY AS TRANSNATIONAL POLITICAL ACTOR

In order to follow the Lockean dictum initially to clear away the conceptual underbrush, it will be useful to divide the consideration of conceptual issues into two parts: first that of the political role of universities and then the place of universities in the transnational arena. This essay will address the role of universities in particular, not postsecondary education in general, because of the dominant power of universities in national postsecondary systems and because of the international reality that universities are the most obvious transnational actors. This claim does not suggest that other postsecondary institutions -- e.g. small liberal arts colleges or community colleges -- are not transnational actors, but only that at the beginning of enquiry it is useful to look at the dominant institution and then later to turn attention to other institutions within the sector of society under consideration.

The threshhold conceptual problem is: what does it mean to talk about universities as political actors? This question raises the issue of the conditions which must be met to ascribe to a university political action. For

the purposes of this essay it seems useful to adopt a very broad conception of political which draws on both empirical and normative theory: who gets what, when, where and how, or, to put it another way, how societies decide their social values and develop authoritative positions in regard to their priorities. So the political role of universities will be that which involves the institution in society's allocation of its resources and its opportunities and in the authoritative deliberations of the society about its values and the social actions consistent with them. Power will be viewed within this definition of the political as a qualitative conception which measures the position of various actors according to their share of a distribution process which is best modelled as a zero sum game. The language of power will include such conceptions as domination and maintenance of autonomy, which will be discussed in detail in a later section of this paper.

Even with these broad definitions of "politics" and "power" we are still left with the problem of establishing the conditions which must be met if we are to identify the university as an actor. Is a university "acting" when its students protest? Is it acting when a professor publishes a paper on an international issue? Is it acting when it owns stock in a company with a subsidiary in South Africa? For purposes of analysis, one should not rule out apriori any one of these examples as an "act" of the university for purposes of understanding the university's political role in the transnational setting. However, it is useful to distinguish the mode of involvement by assessing the strength of ascription of specific action to institutional decision-making procedures both for purposes of developing empirical theory and for making ethical policy assessments. So for this preliminary exercise, the university

will be said to be playing a political role when any of its constituent members participates in the social allocation of resources or opportunities or engages in public deliberation about the policies and values of the society from the vantage point of a position affiliated with the university.

In order to understand the University as a transnational actor, one must distinguish among three contexts for transnational activity: first, the transnational implications of institutional and national activity in the local systems; second, the explicit participation by the university or parts thereof in the international political system; and finally, the role of the university in the international knowledge system.

A. Transnational Implications of Institutional and National Decisions

The importance of this context is that it makes one sensitive to the fact that part of what it is to understand the university as a transnational political actor is to understand the transnational implications of institutional or national political activities. Decisions about institutional priorities often have significant transnational implications. The example of possible competition between foreign languages and physics for limited budget support demonstrates a prima-facie conflict in that a choice to support physics at the expense of foreign languages might subvert the possibility of future participation in the transnational system by students in the institution and perhaps by the university as a whole. However, one must also be sensitive to the transnational implications of the other choice as well: physics is one of the most international of scholarly communities and insofar as resource

decisions are made which might reduce the activity of a physics department, one of the most important international linkages might be jeopardized.(3)

A multi-campus system example illustrates the implications for transnational role of decisions taken for other reasons concerning specific campuses. In a relatively modest retrenchment imposed upon the New Paltz campus of the State University of New York system, many of those let go were faculty with interest in international issues either through language instruction and scholarship or through international relations and international education. These were the areas with the lowest enrollments and therefore were the most vulnerable under the statewide enrollment formula which is the basis of campus budgeting in most state systems. Although not a university but an undergraduate college, New Paltz was one of the most active campuses in the SUNY system in international programs. A decision taken for state systems reasons had profound transnational impact by crippling the capability of a campus to be a transnational actor.(4) This particular example demonstrates the need to assess transnational impact in what appear to be domestic decisions. It also illustrates the transantional political role of universities often in spite of themselves. This particular decision seemed to be internal to SUNY, but it clearly had the potential if not the proved reality of profound impact on the larger international system.

The central lesson to be taken to this first level of transnational activity is that a wide variety of political actions within this level have transnational implications which are only rarely considered within the decision-making process and only intuitively understood by a few scholars and

decision-makers. The question for further investigation which emerges from this simple observation is what "domestic" actions by a university have international parameters and how might we assess transnational impact?

B. Participation in the International Political System

Rarely do universities self-consciously set out to become involved in the international political system. Indeed intentional involvement is mainly limited to the area of participation in the international knowledge system, which will be addressed in the next section of this essay. However, the very importance of the university in both national and transnational settings entails that the university will inevitably become involved institutionally in the international political system. Three examples will illustrate both the degree of involvement and some of its subtleties.

The first example illustrates the insight of the prior section about the transnational parameters of national decisions as well as the self-conscious involvement of universities in the international political system: it is that of the decision by the Conservative Thatcher Government in Great Britain to charge foreign students "economic" fees. During the past ten years successive British governments had been increasing the fees charged overseas students to what had become a subsidized though marginally economic fee—that is the students were charged about what their marginal cost was to the university once it had provided for all of the other students. However, with the continuing economic problems of Great Britain and the ideological commitment of the Conservative Party to reduce public expenditure, the Thatcher Government decided to withdraw

all state subsidies to universities for their overseas students, with the exception of a small number of scholarships to be awarded by the Ministry of Overseas Development to outstanding students from Third World countries.

The debate about this issue has been heated between the universities and the Government. And the debate has been overwhelmingly about the British role in the international political community and the universities' contribution to the maintenance of that role. Although the actual policy is part of an overall domestic program, the debate has centered on the international impact of the decision. The differential effect on specific institutions — e.g. the London School of Economics and the London School of Tropical Medicine have their very existence threatened -- has made the international impact dramatically clear. The units with the most carefully designed programs for foreign students are those most in jeopardy. And the threat to impose high fees on overseas students has already brought almost a 15% reduction in application rate this year. And the total foreign student population in British University is itself about 15%.(4)

This British example has two of features which make it relevant to our understanding of the transnational political role of universities. First, the decision appeared on the surface to be a national decision. The Thatcher government wished to reduce the public support of universities as part of an overall national strategy to reduce the cost of the public sector. But the implications of this action had immediate transnational impact upon access to university education for students from around the world who had been attending university in Great Britain, most of whom came from Third World countries. So

this supposed national action had profound transnational impact on the international economic order and raised significant questions about justice in the distribution of knowledge. Second, the universities clearly recognized their transnational political role and used the importance of this role to justify their stands against these cuts. They argued that Great Britain had an ethical obligation to maintain relative access to students from other countries at a reasonable cost. They also understood the importance of these students to their curriculum and to the universities' future participation in the international knowledge system.

The second example suggests the attractiveness of the university as a point of leverage in affecting international and foreign policy: the protest against the university ownership of stock in companies doing business in South Africa.(6) A number of universities have had various internal constituencies challenge their ownership in companies doing business in South Africa on the grounds that these multi-national corporations encourage South Africa to continue its policy of apartheid. For purposes of this essay, it is not useful to rehearse all of the arguments pro and con, but it is only significant to note that the argument presently being conducted about the role of the university as shareholder is an international policy issue. The university becomes a self-conscious transnational political actor in an area selected for it by political activists. By its own non-action, the university has already been an actor in this particular international show; but the politically active student and professor have forced the university to become self-conscious in its decisions. This example illustrates the intimate connection between international and domestic political issues.

The final example of explicit participation in the international political system is historical but quite informative: the role of American campuses in relation to American involvement in Vietnam. There can be little doubt with the benefit of 20/20 hindsight that the university played a central role through the domestic involvement of various university constituencies and even sometimes of the university as a whole in changing American foreign policy toward the Vietnam War. In the late '60s there were innumerable debates about the appropriateness of university involvement in the international politics of US/Vietnam relations, but the fact of this involvement is a matter of historical record. American universities were clear transnational political actors during the Vietnam era.(7) This example once again illustrates the intimate connection between domestic and international politics. Most universities participate in the transnational political systems by concerning themselves either through their constituent parts or rarely as an institutional whole with an international issue which has become important in domestic politics.

All of these examples of explicit university involvement in internationl political issues illustrate the university's importance as transnational political actor. In the British case, where the universities did not ask to become the center of an international issue between Great Britain and especially the Third World countries, the universities have found themselves completely embroiled and, for the most part, are arguing in favor of a self-conscious international linkage. The South African investments case confirms the transnational paramater of institutional investment decisions and the likely continuing visibility of the university as an institution to influence in order

to affect international politics. And the historical case of the role of American universities in the disengagement from Vietnam reminds the student of university political roles in transnational settings of the inseparability of the university as a social institution from the ebb and flow of political history.

These three cases also allow one to distinguish participation in the international political system from the modes of participation in the international knowledge system outlined later. As transnational political actors, universities establish their role through their national systems. They become transnational actors usually by participating in the domestic political arena. Their participation in this system is often in the form of activity by various constituencies although sometimes as institutions. For example, during the Vietnam debates, the usual participants were faculty and student groups, not universities as institutions. But occasionally, as during the Cambodian bombings when many universities suspended classes, the universities acted as unitary institutions. What made universities transnational actors was the substance of the issue with which they were dealing; their forum was domestic.

All of these examples confirm a phenomenon that is understood in its parts although still quite unclear as a whole. The major empirical question must be: what are the conditions which must exist in order to provoke institutional involvement of the university as a self-conscious political actor in the international political system? And the major ethical question should be:when should the participation of various parts of the university uld lead to the ascription of institution-wide involvement and what procedural and

substantive constraints ought to guide such activity?

C. The University in the International Knowledge System

Before one can begin to talk about the role of the university at this level of transnational involvement, the dimensions of the international knowledge system need to be clarified. The existence of an international knowledge system is documented by a number of simple observations: the development of the international communication system through satellite technology and the relative reliability of international mail; the development of multi-national publishing corporations; the multi-national involvement of a large number of corporations with different national bases; the complexity of an international market system in currencies, commodities, and ideas; the large scale movement of people as well as ideas through a relatively efficient international transportation system; and finally, the economic and political power of post-industrial countries intimately tied together through historical development and formal bonds of diplomacy and trade.(8) All of these factors have created an international knowledge system with a number of emerging characeristics of importance in understanding the role of universities in it.

As recently as 1960, if one had mapped the flow of knowledge and informtion across national boundaries, one would have seen a relatively simple set of lines flowing mainly from the US to Western Europe with a small number of arrows pointing from the US to the Third World and from France and Britain to Third World Countries and with even fewer arrows from the USSR to its zone of influence in Eastern Europe. But by 1980, although the arrows would still be

pointing more from the post-industrial countries to the Third World, among post-industrial countries there would be a number of two-way arrows.

Another significant change from 1960 to 1980 would be the place of universities in this international commerce of knowledge. In 1960, much of the knowledge exchange would have occurred in scholarly forums as manifested by the pattern of citation studies.(9) Of course most of this knowledge would be exchanged in English language publications, predominantly published in the US and Great Britain. By 1980, although the role of universities is still great, the existence of a large number of communication sytems within multi-national corporations and international agencies quite apart from universities as well as extensive exchange of mass media using satellite broadcast technology means that the university is no longer dominant and perhaps not even prima inter pares. The university is only one participant in the international knowledge system and the system is now one affected as much or more by the social organization of the multi-national corporation and the technology of mass media as by the university. The university has yet to adjust to this new reality. But the manner of the university participation in this system is still important enough to be worth understanding and may give us clues about new modes of participation yet to be imagined.

The university participates in the international knowledge system just as it participates in its local knowledge system: through its functions of teaching, research, and service. And the university also acts through the role model of eductional institution which it provides. The international knowledge system is the universe of institutions and agencies which produce, disseminate

and use knowledge self-consciously and view their role as being defined at least in part by this participation in the system of similar units. It will be useful to examine briefly each mode of participation.

The university as a teaching institution participates in the international knowledge system through the students it accepts, through the curriculum it offers, and through the faculty it hires. Within its own national setting, the admissions policy of the university toward its own nationals in part determines which of its nationals will receive enough postsecondary education actually to participate as individuals in the international knowledge system. The university's acceptance of overseas students, particularly those from the Third World who go to post-industrial countries, determines to some degree the intimacy of the particular institution with the international knowledge system. The U.S. statistics concerning the scale of foreign student admission to American institutions are staggering. Approximately 300,000 international students are presently studying in the U.S. at an approximate cost of $30 Billion . These numbers are growing at the rate of 12 to 16 per cent per year. Studies of foreign students,particularly in American institutions, show an intimate connection between their university experience and their performance when they return to their home countries.(10)

The curriculum itself in so far as it offers self-conscious connection with international scholarly communities inducts students into the international knowledge system. Particularly in so far as the university provides adequate language facility to communicate in a second language, it provides the threshhold opportunity to plug into the system, although the

domination of English in the international system, which will be discussed in more detail later, makes this language proficiency somewhat less important for participation in the system if the language of the home university is English, although it is still substantial even then. The example of faculty with involvement in the international knowledge system is another factor which relates the teaching function of the institution to the larger international system.(11)

In research, the interrelationship of the university with the international knowledge system is almost complete. In most disciplines the agenda for research — what is considered to be a legitimate problem and what is thought to be an appropriate method of enquiry — is determined by the norms of disciplinary communities which know no national boundaries but which are clearly dominated by a relatively small number of universities mainly in the post-industrial countries. However, it is important to note that this pattern of domination is not imposed without constraint by the international knowledge community itself. In other words, physicists at MIT could not impose a revolutionary paradigm on the explanation of quarks without the agreement of the international community of physicists. But there is no doubt that a new paradigm coming from physicists at MIT would attract more serious attention than from a physicist working in a small college in Yorkshire or a university in Southern Nigeria. Citation studies and analyses of the relationship between post-industrial and Third World universities support the intimacy of the connection of universities with the international knowledge system and the pattern of domination that exists in the system.(12)

The service function of universities provided its most intimate connections with the international knowledge system during the halycon days of the 1960s when large numbers of post-industrial universities were supported by their governments in exercises of so called "institution building" in Third World countries.(13) There are two significantly different interpretations of this involvement: one focuses upon the attempt of the post-industrial countries to continue to enhance their domination of the rest; the other suggests that this involvement is just a reinforcement of the trends of more explicit university involvement as transnational actors. Whichever interpretation one wishes to accept, the important fact is that even the service function reinforces the importance of university activity in the international knowledge system.

The final and perhaps most important mode of university involvement in the international knowledge system has been the very model of knowledge generation and dissemination which it provides across national boundaries. Historically the experiences of one national university system has influenced another: the impact of British and then German universities on the United States stands as a relevant example.(14) A more contemporary example has been the connection between the American land grant model and the emergence of similar institutions in the Third World.(15) As an institutional form the university changes itself as a result of its entwinement with the international knowledge system.

A range of important questions emerges from these observations about the transnational political role of universities in the international knowledge

setting. A systems question deserves further elaboration—what is the present character of the international knowledge system in terms of its institutional composition and the dynamics of exchange wihtin it? How does the university's role presently compare with its past in relationship to the other participants in the system? And finally, how may we expect the mode of university participation in the system to change as the system itself continues to evolve in the 1980s?

II. INTERDEPENDENCE AND AUTONOMY: EXPLANATION AND PRESCRIPTION FOR THE 1980S

Most of what has been said so far illustrates the interdependence of universities in their transnational settings: both with other universities and the other actors in the systems as well. But the problems of autonomy within this interdependent system have been implicit. The purpose of this section of the essay is to identify aspects of both interdependence and autonomy which are especially important to understanding the transnational political role of universities and which seem to be critical in developing policies to guide universities in playing their transnational political role in a manner consistent with justifiable political values. This analysis can best begin by considering the features of the transnational political role which display the impact of international interdependence.

A. Interdependence

The rhetoric of international interdependence is now so commonplace as to be almost meaningless. However, the reality of that interdependence is so

significant to the daily life of the university that it cannot be dismissed because the concepts for describing reality have become so cliche. Instead the task is to clarify the features of this interdependence and its impact on the present and future.

Interestingly, there may be some dispute about the force of interdependence on the university in comparison with a number of strictly national or local forces. Indeed, Dietrich Goldschmidt has suggested that the balance of importance is with the national:

> International relations in science and scholarship, as in other areas of public life, have become increasingly interwoven. Yet the movement toward mass higher education in the past thirty years underlines the uniqueness of each national system of higher education. The particular historical features of each country are manifested in their educational systems, which serve to introduce each succeeding generation to the nation's cultural and economic system. In contrast to the international nature of science, the functions of higher education are nationally determined, increasingly so as systems lose their elitest character. National histories, cultures, and economic systems, as well as varying authority structures and processes of informal communication, lend different weight to certain common features that are present in all of the countries analyzed, such as relative professorial independence, state supervision, and comprehensive planning. (16)

In the context of the particular European countries which Prof. Goldschmidt and his colleagues analyzed, one cannot take strong exception to his observation. However, the analysis of this essay along with the evidence of other studies over the last thirty years would have to suggest the increasing impact of interdependence on the development of various national systems of universities.(17) One of the reasons for the increased impact of interdependence is that within universities it is rather artificial to isolate the international nature of science from the national character of universities.

Indeed, the evidence seems to suggest that the interdependence of international science is an important contributor to the interdependence of universities in the international knowledge system.

Universities' involvement in international politics may tend to encourage them all to develop features akin to the dominant models in the post-industrial world. And within the post-industrial system over time the various universities adopt innovations of organization and program from one another. The research commitments of German and American universities are now quite characteristic of British and Japanese institutions.(18) The land grant practicality of American state universities is now manifested in some of the activities of university level institutions in Scandinavia, Germany, and Britain.(19) So the impact of interdependence on the operation of universities as well as on the disciplines which exist within universities should not be underestimated. Instead, it should be more explicitly investigated and related to relevant variables.

The transnational movement of students from one country to another in the pursuit of higher education is another element increasing the international interdependence. In 1969-70, there were 134,959 foreign students in American institutions of higher education; by 1979-80, the number had grown to 264,000. And patterns within these gross figures illustrate the important connections between the interdependence which these populations by their very presence create and other forces for interdependence in the international order: the number of students from OPEC countries had increased from 12,292 in 1969-70 to 89,120 in 1979-80. (20) So the impact of transnational student migration has reinforced and been reinforced by the independency created by the world oil

crisis. The scale of interdependency will be increased by the combination of greater transnational student mobility and the whole complex of energy and communications changes which are part of present and future realities.

The role of technology and language in encouraging this interdependence must be clearly acknowledged. In most scientific disciplines and in most teaching of science, the state of knowledge demands computer technology. (Indeed the writing of this most unscientific essay is being done on a computer word processing system.) Computers and communication technologies mean that the knowledge base of each national system requires similar minimum competence for access and offers mass opportunity for sharing large bases of data and understanding. Communications technology has led, in conjunction with international political realities, to two common languages which dominate international discourse--English and mathematics. The fact that these two languages are the medium of international discourse means that there is at hand a framework for communication across nations that is accessible to all nations. To make this latter claim is not to deny political aspects of this domination which will be the center of attention in the next section of this essay; it is only to note a feature of reality that supports the judgment that international interdependence is a critical force in the developing transnational role of universities and never should be underestimated.

A final feature of interdependence which needs brief elucidation is that of creating an international forum for political activity and value debate. In so far as the university plays a transnational political role, it will become a player in a game where the disputes are inextricably linked to value disputes

between nations and where national arguments take on international characteristics. Issues of access to university education in a particular country may well affect access in many other countries— the British debate illustrates this feature. Universities will be unlikely to be able to assume one political stance nationally and another in playing their transnational, statesmanship roles.

If universities are to acknowledge their interdependence in the international order, they will have to begin to assess all of their policies in that context. The question can no longer be a simple calculation of institutional self-interest in a national setting but will have to become one which acknowledges rights and responsibilities to a transnational range of constituents and clients. The impact on policy making of this interdependence is a problem which may be addressed only after assessing the conflict with autonomy which this interdependence creates.

B. Autonomy

The international interdependence outlined above has interesting implications for the autonomy of individual universities: on the one hand, the structure of the present international order reduces the autonomy of most universities; but, on the other, this international knowledge system may contribute to greater institutional autonomy within the national political systems.

Before one devotes great attention to the issue of autonomy, he must be quite clear about the concept as it applies to universities. Historically, the issue of autonomy of universities has been inextricably interwoven with the issue of academic freedom. In order to guarantee freedom of teaching and learning, the concepts of "lerhrfreiheit" and "lernfreiheit" grew up in the German universities.(21) The freedom of the teacher to teach and do research became part of the culture of the post-industrial university. The freedom of the students to learn what and where they choose has never been as strong as that of their professors but in many national systems is still quite significant. It is important to understand that the raison d'etre of institutional autonomy has been the maintenance of various forms of academic freedom.

Some writers have distinguished between two varieties of autonomy --- procedural and substantive. Procedural autonomy is the right of the institution to devise its own form of governance and own mechanisms of decision-making and administrative control. Substantive autonomy is the right of the university to

decide its own academic policies in regard to teaching and research.(22) Although this distinction is useful in identifying different sectors for the exercise of the right of autonomy and for assessing the degree of autonomy to be claimed, it is dangerous to exaggerate this distinction, because the reality of modern day bureaucracies is such that impositions on procedural autonomy also have direct impact on substantive autonomy. For example, in New York State, the Division of the Budget has direct line control on expenditures and now regularly strikes line items associated with specific academic programs. This exercise of procedural accountability is in fact an invasion of the substantive autonomy of the university. But for our purposes the task is to recognize this distinction in order to suggest that the issues of autonomy arising in the context of international interdependence are issues of substantive autonomy in the first instance but also have impact on procedural autonomy in the national setting.

A fact of international life must be kept in mind as one analyzes interdependence as it affects university autonomy: this interdependence is in an unequal world where a small number of industrially advanced nations dominate a large number of developing countries. Therefore although all participants in the international system are interdependent, this relationship manifests itself through a pattern of domination and inequality. This pattern of domination as it affects university autonomy is dramatically illustrated by an anecdote reported by Professor Ali Mazrui in his book, Political Values and the Educated Class in Africa.(23) The Vice Chancellor of the then Makerere University College in Uganda, Mr. Lule (later to become a short term prime minister after the ouster of Amin), asked Professor Mazrui about a complaint about a comparison he had made in one of his classes between Uganda under then Prime Minister Obote

and the Leviathan of Thomas Hobbes. The complaint had come from "high quarters." Professor Mazrui insightfully analyzes this event as follows:

> The situation captured a number of important issues....First, there was the political nearness between the campus and the national structure of power. A comparative exercise in political philosophy by a scholar could become an issue with direct implications for wider polity....Secondly, the name Thomas Hobbes was symbolic in the circumstances. In that very conversation between Mr. Lule and myself Hobbes signified and represented the intellectual presence of the Western academic heritage in our midst.(24)

This interpretation suggests a number of characteristics about the interaction between universities and the international knowledge system which are relevant not only in regard to universities in Third World countries but also to universities in post-industrial settings. The intellectual presence of international scholarly communities limits the autonomy of any given university or part thereof wholly to disassociate itself from the dominant conceptual paradigms, in this case illustrated by the Hobbes reference but more generally recognized in the classical work of Thomas Kuhn in the history of science.(25) Knowledge is developed and disseminated in an international context. The recent histories of Chinese higher education as well as innovations in Tanzania document the impact of the international knowledge system on the operation of universities in national settings which are attempting to distinguish themselves from dominant paradigms.(26) University autonomy is limited in its substantive activity by the international knowledge community.

A second aspect of the Mazrui case seems useful to illustrate one version of the impact of the interdependence on the autonomy of the university in its national setting. The more the university acts consistently with international knowledge development norms, the more it may put at risk its

autonomy in relation to its national host, if that national setting is not committed to the canons of free enquiry which are part of the international knowledge norms. Although, on the other hand, if a university can successfully demonstrate its status in the international knowledge system, it might also use those norms to protect itself from interference by the state in the domestic political system. The impact of the international status system can be very real in post-industrial and Third World countries. The cloak of international respectability can be used to provide greater procedural and substantive autonomy in relation to the national political system; but especially substantive autonomy. If the national system attempts to change what is considered economics or physics, the university can point to the interntional scholarly communities' standards in defence of a position. But the protection can also be domination in that a Chinese version of economics will have little opportunity to be tested in the international scholarly community if it is significantly different from the post-industrial norms which dominate the system.

Another element of domination affects substantive autonomy in the international knowledge system: the overwhelming domination of world class universities in the development of norms and standards. A very small handful of universities have established the paradigm of what constitutes a university and what is worthwhile knowledge in the whole variety of disciplines of enquiry. These world class universities -- e.g., Harvard, Oxford, Cambridge, the Sorbonne, and Stockholm -- constitute a center around which all other universities are a periphery. And from this center concentric circles go out with other post-industrial universities in the inner rings and most Third World

universities in the outer rings. This aspect of international reality gives the world class universities great autonomy and the rest progressively less in setting their own priorities in relation to their national settings. To characterize the international knowledge system in this way is not to paint a static picture with no changes, but the evolution in substantive autonomy within the international knowledge system is quite slow. And attempts at revolutions in relation to this informal but powerful authority system historically have not been successful, as recently illustrated by the return of the Chinese universities to a more traditional model and by their essential segregation from the international system when they were different.

If the prior analysis of the features of the international knowledge system is correct, the implications for the transnational political role of universities are significant. Regardless of institutional choice, universities are intimate participants in an international knowledge system which sometimes limits and sometimes enhances institutional autonomy but always affects and is affected by the universities' policies and actions. Therefore, as transnational political actors, universities must assess their value positions both nationally and internationally insofar as they wish to justify the impact they have on the system or take steps to temper the effect of the system on them. Universities are inextricably tied to the central debates of the contempoary international order.

In becoming more self-conscious about their political roles, universities must confront important value conflicts, particularly between the commitment to justice and the commitment to the pursuit and dissemination of

truth. The conflict here may not be necessary but in many cases may be real. The most expeditious pursuit of disciplinary knowledge may not be consistent with a significant contribution toward greater justice in the distribution of knowledge, which the inequities of the international political system in general and the international knowledge system in particular may be construed to require as a priority. Understanding the conceptual dimensions of this conflict and then the policy implications is the important challenge. Not to meet this challenge may be to put at risk any semblance of autonomy given the pressures which interdependence of class as well as character may exert.

III. RESEARCH AGENDA

This essay has outlined a framework for viewing the transnational political role of universities which identifies various levels of involvement in the international political and knowledge systems and which focuses upon the features of interdependence, domination, and autonomy which have special policy relevance for the university as it reconsiders its stance toward its political roles in both national and international settings. However, at the outset this exercise was called a prolegomenon, which is the most that can be claimed for the naivete of this conceptual framework and the meagre research base upon which it is premised. The task is now to outline a research strategy which will allow scholars with an interest in universities and an interest in international studies to provide a more elaborate framework for explanation and a more sophisticated approach to policy judgment.

There are tasks of systems description and evaluation and institutional

investigation and prescription. At the aggregate level one first must establish a clearer picture of the international political system and its relationship with the international knowledge system. Network studies of institutional relationships across national boundaries, with international organizations, and among individuals could provide a more accurate picture of the international context within which universities act.(27) Methods such as those used to study multi-national corporations and non-governmental international actors are all applicable to this problem.(28) Citation studies which have contributed so much to an understanding of international science may be creatively applied to descriptions of university networks in international context.(29) Appropriate analyses of a range of knowledge issues with international implications as reported in the international press would allow a careful mapping of causal relationships and important correlations.(30)

The aggregate strategies are useful for providing outlines but different approaches are necessary to provide a fuller picture of empirical reality. A series of intensive case studies of particular universities in relation to each other would provide a critical first step toward an accurate understanding of the university as a transnational political actor. A careful account of different types of universities — e.g., world class, national, state, local, or, to use other categor es, post-industrial and Third World — as transnational actors with careful at ention to the interaction among the three levels of activity outlined above would allow us to begin to postulate hypotheses about the independent and dependent variables at work which must be developed in order to explain the behaviour of these unique political actors. Such case studies provide holistic analyses which are invaluable for understanding the texture of

political reality. They also offer the insights which allow one to develop policy alternatives for a variety of universities.

Given the dominance of experimental and statistical research methods in contemporary social sciences, one must justify the use of case studies as an important technique of enquiry and not as an inferior method of providing data and explanation. Paul Diesing, in his Patterns of Social Discovery,(31) eloquently identifies the legitimate place of case studies in his account of what he calls "holistic method." Case studies using modes of enquiry such as clinical diagnosis and participant observation allow the scholar to get on the inside of a reality and describe it from that perspecive. To undertake holistic enquiry is not to foreclose a whole range of social scientific strategies such as surveys and data analysis, but it is to make these techniques subsidiary to an understanding of what is happening from the perspective of the insider. The holistic method also encourages the scholar to let categories of explanation emerge from the reality instead of forcing the case into a specific theoretical framework.

The Diesing description of holistic method in relation to case studies is quite suggestive and insightful. However, it should not be allowed to minimize the importance of theory in case studies as in other modes of social enquiry. Indeeed, Diesing himself is quite aware of the importance of relating case studies to articulate theories in order to construct a systematic explanation. For the purpose of this essay, it is essential that any suggestion of case study method acknowledge the necessity of theoretical perspective in the development of case studies if in fact the cases are to generate explanatory

knowledge. Cases must frame common questions informed by a theoretical perspective if they are to advance our enquiry about the role of universities as transnational actors.

Exactly what constitutes theory in this overall task of scholarly explanation is not completely clear. There are at least two approaches to the use of theory in case studies which seem relevant to the task. First, there is the use of alternative conceptual, indeed almost disciplinary, frameworks to guide enquiry into the particular case. An example of this approach is Graham Allison's analysis of the Cuban Missile Crisis in his Essence of Decision.(32) Allison posits three models all of which are necessary to "explain" the Cuban missile crisis. The relationship among the models is not clear in the Allison book and constitutes a conceptual problem for anyone taking this approach. It seems that all three are necessary and that his list is not sufficient. For example, in applying the Allisonian analysis to Third World universities, it becomes quite clear that none of the models focuses upon the impact of tribal identification on the politics of the university. Therefore, one must develop a fourth model, which a group of students at Alvan Ikoku College in Nigeria developed, that emhpasizes the importance of tribal or ethnic identification in accounting for policy realities in Nigeria. So as one approaches case studies, the whole range of analytical perspectives must be explicitly developed and applied.

Another meaning of theory in the context of the case method of enquiry is in the development of a descriptive framework within which testable hypotheses may be offered and then assessed in the light of a number of case

studies. An example of this approach would be to draw upon the analytical framework of this essay which suggests two contexts for participation by universities as transnational actors -- the international political and international knowledge systems -- and three levels of activity -- the institutional, the local/national, and the transnational — in order to frame testable hypotheses. One such testable hypothesis might be: success in the international knowledge system is a necessary condition for significant participation in the international political system. Another testable hypothesis would be: the degree of activity at the transnational level is directly related to the quality and quantity of activity at the institutional level with transnational implications. Each of these explanations of the university's transnational political role would be assessable from a series of case studies which offer particular examples from a number of institutional and national settings. Statistical methods of correlation may serve the case studies but will not in and of themselves offer adequate analysis in order to provide a reliable test of the hypotheses. Only holistic methods of enquiry and holistic judgments will suffice.

Another use of case analysis is in clarifying the policy choices available to universities in deciding upon the degree and character of their activity as transnational institutions. The collection of cases as examples and counterexamples in an analysis of the value issues confronting policymakers in and about the university is a common though not explicitly recognized use of the case method of analysis. It is plausible to argue that most decision-making is an exercise in inarticulate case method. If one can have at hand a number of carefully investigated case studies designed to clarify possible responses to

problems of value conflict, then the careful argument of alternative value positions can be illuminated by the implications of such arguments for institutional or national policy. For example, if an institution is attempting to decide a resource allocation question between an expansion of classical languages and the development of an agricultural research station in a Third World country, it is absolutely necessary to understand the claims of justice inherent in the demands for a New International Order to be able to make this value judgment. Claims of either convention or efficiency cannot by themselves decide the issue. And a knowledge of how other institutions have analyzed the problem and acted with justification in similar settings is absolutely essential information in order to provide context for a particular institutional judgment. This use of case analysis is seldom formalized and raises significant questions about comparing cases for ethical judgment. But the use of case analysis in normative policy judgments is an everyday reality: only the lack of understanding of the logic of this analysis and the lack of explicit case studies hampers the effectiveness of this mode of decision-making.

The state of the scholarly literature of case analysis about the transnational role of universities for either purposes of explanation or prescription is quite mixed. There is a useful literature analyzing student movements in universities which is a legacy of the 1960s.(33) There are a few examples of mapping the transnational relationships of universities drawing on the perspective of Chad Alger, who emphasizes the important transnational role of local non-governmental and sub national units.(34) But the largest literature by far is that looking at the relationship between post-industrial universities and Third World countries. The studies of international science by

Thomas Eisemon at McGill and David Court at Nairobi offer invaluable data and frameworks for analysis of the role of universities in the international knowledge system.(35) Studies of particular institutional relationships such as that between Michigan State and Nsukkah in Nigeria are also informative case studies.(36) And finally, the theoretical literature about multi-national corporations and private, non-governmental actors is suggestive in terms of methods and possible outcomes.(37) This literature about multi-national corporations will be relevant to understanding the actions of large numbers of universities but will be especially important to an analysis of the university equivalents to multi-national corporations such as the University of Maryland with its many overseas branches on military bases.

At the top of the research agenda must rank the challenge of developing some extensive case studies of post-industrial universities in the context of the international political and knowledge systems as well as more studies of the experiences of specific Third World countries. At the same time, one needs a theoretically informed account of the aggregate systems which will allow one to relate the insights of case studies to explanations of the behaviour of whole systems. Finally, the decision-making process of universities as transnational actors must be informed by the value debates and specific activities of other institutions similarly situated.

CONCLUSION

This paper has offered a tentative conceptual framework for understanding the transnational political role of universities. This framework

categorizes university participation in a large international political system and an important international knowledge system which is part of the larger political universe. Three levels of university activity are viewed as relevant and interactive — the institutional, local/national and international levels. This conceptual framework allows one to examine issues of interdependence and autonomy in a way which illuminates the conflict between these two characteristics of reality. It also suggests the importance of patterns of domination through interdependence in order to understand the dynamics of maintaining institutional autonomy as a political goal. Finally, the conceptual framework and concern with interdependence and autonomy have led to a research agenda which emphasizes the development of aggregate data and explanations informed by a number of case studies using holistic methods.

One may best summarize this essay as one of invitation: a request that scholars with diverse intellectual interests and disciplinary skills turn their attention to the transnational political role of universities and a suggestion that those who make judgments as administrators or public citizens in universities must come to understand the transnational implications of the problems which are presented to them and the solutions which they offer. To accept this invitation will not be to come to one scholar's party or to provide one administrator with a talisman for correct decisions. But it will be to ask that more of us join the ranks of Lockean underlaborers clearing away the underbrush of confusion surrounding these issues, so that the next time Thomas Hobbes puts a scholar in a difficult position at home or abroad more knowledge will be available to explain and justify the critical importance of universities as transnational actors.

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NOTES

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2. Chadwick Alger, Your Community in the World, The World in Your Community ,(Columbus,Ohio: The Mershon Center,The Ohio State University, November,1973). Also see "Impact of Cities on International Systems," Ekistics, 44/274, pp253-263.

3. Irving J. Spitzberg,Jr., "Universities and the International Exchange of Knowledge: A Conceptual Analysis," Universities and the International Exchange of Knowledge,Irving J. Spitzberg,Jr., editor, (New York: Praeger, Forthcoming).

4. Oral report of scholars at SUNY Conference on International Studies in November,1979.

5. The Times Higher Education Supplement has had an article on this topic is almost every issue since it resumed publication in October, 1979. See for example, Ngaio Crequer, "I'm Not Bluffing About Those Closure Threats," an interview with Lord Annan, Times Higher Education Supplement, December 28, 1979, p.6., and David Pierpoint Gardner, "Campus and Government Must Reach New Understanding," Times Higher Education Supplement,. January 4, 1980, p6.

6. "Bok Defends University Neutrality," The Chronicle of Higher Education, March 10, 1979, p9.

7. Seymour Martin Lipset and Philip G. Altbach, editors, Students in Revolt, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969.

8. See any of the grand pontificators' accounts of modern society: e.g., Daniel Bell, The Coming of Post-Industrial Society, New York: Basic Books, 1973. and Zbigniew Brzezinski, Between two Ages: America's Role in the Technotronic Era, New York: Viking Press, 1971.

9. See Thomas Eisemon et al., "Collective Self-Reliance: Possibilities and Limitations," in Spitzberg, op.cit.

10. See Seth Spaulding and Michael J. Flack et al, The World's Students in the United States: A Review and Evaluation of Research on Foreign Students, New York: Praeger, 1976, and France Pruitt, Adaptation of African Students to American Education, Council on International Studies, Buffalo: State University of New York at Buffalo, 1977. Also see Edward B. Fiske, "Problems Arise as Colleges Recruit Students Overseas," New York Times, Sunday, February 25, 1980, p1 and p40.

11. Genevieve Liu James, A Profile of the International Activities of SUNY/AB Faculty for 1976-1978, Buffalo: The Colleges, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1979.

12. See essays by Eisemon et al, Philip Altbach, and David Court in Spitzberg, op.cit.

13. Philip Altbach and Gail Kelly, editors, Education and Colonialism, New York: Longmans, 1978. and Ngoni Chideya, "An American Approach to African Higher Education: An Exploratory Assessment," Unpublished dissertation, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1976.

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15. John W. Hanson, Education in Nsukka: A Study in Institution Building Among the Modern Ibo, East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1968.

16. John H. Van de Graff, et. al. Academic Power, New York: Praeger, 1978, p147.

17. John Fobes, "Universities, International Organizations, and the Exploration of Alternative Futures for World Order," in Spitzberg, op.cit.

18. J. Ben David, Centers of Learning: Britain, France, Germany and the United States, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1977).

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Great Britain a number of red bricks and the Robbins round of universities looked to the American land grant experience.

20. Edward B. Fiske, op.cit.

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23. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978

24. ibid, p2

25.Thomas Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972.

26. Occasional articles in the Times Higher Education Supplement and The Chronicle of Higher Education have indicated that the Chinese are returning to pre Cultural Revolution university arrangements and that the Tanzanian restructuring of the University of Dar es Salaam has not moved dramatically away from more traditional African universities. See, for example, John Gardner, "China's Intellectual Revolution," Times Higher Education Supplement, January 18, 1980.

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31. Paul Diesing, Patterns of Discovery in the Social Sciences, New York: Aldine-DeGruyter, 1971.

32.Graham T. Allison, Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis, Boston: Little Brown, 1971.

33. Altbach and Kelley, op. cit.

34. Chad Alger, op. cit.

35. The scholarship of Thomas Eisemon and David Court cited earlier is relevant to this task.

36. Hanson, op.cit.

37. Barnet et. al., Mansbach et. al., and Alger, op.cit.